



May 16, 2019

Chairman Jimbo Jackson  
Leon County Board of County Commissioners  
301 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Re: North Florida Resiliency Connection

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the North Florida Resiliency Connection (NFRC). I appreciate the opportunity to address your questions as well as clear up some misinformation about the project. First and foremost, there are a few key points to address some of the concerns raised:

- The NFRC is a proposed new transmission line across northern Florida that would enhance the reliability and resiliency of service in good weather and bad for customers;
- The currently proposed NFRC route was based on a balancing of a variety of factors as discussed below;
- The proposed route will not result in either the acquisition or removal of any structures, including homes; and,
- The project will be designed in an environmentally-sound manner; will not impact groundwater quality or surface water quality, spring zones, karst features or sink holes; and will seek to minimize impacts to trees.

Building on those points, below are answers to the specific questions in your letter:

**1. The current proposed transmission line route through Leon County and any analysis as to why said path was chosen.**

Route selection involves a multidisciplinary team, weighing and considering a number of factors. These factors include, among others, identification and consideration of alternative routes, safety considerations, environmental considerations, long range planning, costs and sound engineering principles. In Leon County, the balancing of these factors led to the current proposed route.

**2. Alternate routes through Leon County that have been assessed and any analysis as to why said routes were not chosen.**

During initial reviews of the project, Gulf Power considered whether a route along Interstate 10 was viable using the criteria previously mentioned. For a large part of the route, the project is located on private property that is adjacent to the I-10 corridor. However, because of existing development along I-10 in and around Tallahassee, the project could not be sited on private property adjacent to the I-10



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corridor in this area. Gulf Power also looked at locating within the I-10 corridor; however, FDOT has rules and regulations governing use of limited access rights-of-way and the project did not meet those criteria. For these reasons, it was determined early on that I-10 was not viable as an alternative route in this area.

Using the criteria outlined above, Gulf Power also looked at routing to the north of Tallahassee; however, based on a balancing the criteria set forth above, we were unable to identify a northern route along existing linear facilities that did not involve the acquisition or removal of dozens of structures, including homes.

This is not the case for the proposed southern route. Although easement rights to cross residential properties would be required, no homes would be acquired or removed in the proposed southern route. We understand that there has been a significant amount of misinformation on this issue, so we want to be very clear on this point – the current proposed route will not require the acquisition or removal of any homes or other structures.

The majority of the proposed route is along existing highways, local roads and existing utility rights-of-way. Gulf Power continues to review alternative routes with the City of Tallahassee to identify opportunities for colocation with their transmission line facilities to the south and west of the City, which would provide significant benefits to both Gulf Power and the City of Tallahassee.

### **3. Status of evaluation of alternate routes.**

As noted previously, discussion of the potential colocation of transmission lines with the City of Tallahassee within their existing permitted corridor to the south and west of the City, including in and around the Apalachicola National Forest, is ongoing. We plan to be back before the Tallahassee City Commission in the near future with a status update.

### **4. The voltage of the power transmission lines.**

The NFRC will operate at 161 kilovolts.

### **5. The pole specifications, including the proposed height and distances between each pole.**

Generally, we expect the project to include single pole structures, primarily made of concrete with reinforcing steel, though some may be made completely of steel. The poles will typically be installed by auguring holes in the ground, setting the poles and backfilling with crushed rock; however, some structures may use cast-in-place foundations. The poles will generally be approximately 75-110 feet in height and about 3-4 feet in diameter. Pole setting depths will be determined based on soil samples and geotechnical surveys, but are usually approximately 18-20 feet. Span lengths between poles are anticipated to range from approximately 350 to 600 feet. Design and engineering for the project is not yet complete; as we move forward we will be able to identify more detailed information.



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**6. The pole locations, including whether the pole will be located within the right-of-way or easement.**

First, let me clarify the use of the terms right-of-way and easement for this project. Right-of-way consists of the local government or state-owned lands where roadways are situated. Easements are interests in private property, typically negotiated with land owners, to use a portion of their property for a stated purpose – in this case, for the construction, operation and ongoing maintenance of the transmission line.

Estimates of pole locations are still being finalized, but we do know that the vast majority of poles along the current proposed route would be located just inside private property within the proposed easements, as close to the property line boundary with the road right-of-way as practicable. Final precise locations may require adjustment as the transmission line is constructed.

**7. Distances between the poles and homes/other structures, the right-of-way, and the roadway.**

The poles will be set just inside private property within the proposed easements being acquired along road right-of-way boundaries. The offset distances will vary, but we will try to place poles as close to property line boundaries and coincident with existing distribution poles where practicable.

**8. Purpose of easements (i.e. maintenance of poles or for placement of poles).**

Transmission easements are for the construction, operation and ongoing maintenance of the poles and lines over the life of the transmission line. In addition, the easements allow Gulf Power to cut and keep clear any trees or vegetation that encroach on the necessary clearance or cause dangerous conditions to exist.

**9. Analysis/study of the impact of the NFRC Project on the groundwater, surface water, wetlands.**

The NFRC project will be designed to comply with all applicable environmental regulations, including all state and federal environmental requirements. There will be no impacts to groundwater quality or surface water quality. Wetland impact assessments are currently ongoing, and we will minimize impacts to wetlands through route selection and construction methods. Gulf Power is preparing to submit environmental permit applications early this summer.

**10. Analysis/study of the impact of the NFRC Project on spring zones, karst features, and/or the likelihood of sinkholes within Leon County.**

It's important to note that power distribution and transmission poles are located throughout the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, where they have been operating safely for decades. In addition, Gulf Power has extensive experience installing, operating and maintaining power poles throughout north Florida.



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The NFRC project will not cause impacts with regard to spring zones, karst features or sinkholes. During construction, Gulf Power will take soil borings to ensure that specific ground locations are appropriate for the installation of a transmission pole. If we find unexpected conditions, pole placement would be adjusted to a location that is appropriate.

**11. Analysis/study of the impact of the NFRC Project on trees, including tree removals, buffer impacts and impacts to tree canopies and/or tree root systems.**

Because it is still early in the process and the route is not yet final, we do not yet know. However, it's important to note that part of our route evaluation process is to minimize tree removal to the extent possible. That's one reason we work hard to collocate and utilize existing easements and rights-of-way where we can, to help reduce our impact on trees.

**12. Analysis/study regarding safety of the traveling public along the proposed transmission route, including Tram Road.**

By locating the power line and associated poles in private easements outside of road right-of-way, there should not be any impacts to the traveling public along adjacent roads, including Tram Road. It should be noted that power lines are located throughout Leon County, the City of Tallahassee and within Gulf Power's territory both within road rights-of-way and adjacent to road rights-of-way.

**13. The proposed timeline for the NFRC Project, including acquisition and construction phases.**

Easement acquisition is ongoing, and we expect to file permit applications early this summer. Construction is currently scheduled to start in 2020 and is expected to take approximately six to nine months to complete.

We are pleased to be able to provide more information about the transmission line process and our proposed route, and will share additional information with you when it becomes available. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns. Questions can also be asked through our project phone line at (850) 872-3232, or via email at [NFRC@NextEraEnergy.com](mailto:NFRC@NextEraEnergy.com).

Thank you, and we look forward to continuing to work together on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. L. Bryant, P.E."

Timothy L. Bryant, P.E.  
External Affairs – New Development  
Florida Renewable Partners/Gulf Power Company



cc:

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